

Brittain, J.

S/N: 09/681,420

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending. In the Office Action mailed March 30, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7, 12, 14, 28-30, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by Wang et al. (USP 5,928,148). The Examiner maintained the objection to claim 28 because lines 12 to 13 are grammatically awkward. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's allowance of claim 18 and those claims depending therefrom. Claims 6, 8-11, 13, 15-17, 31, 32, and 34-37 were indicated as being allowable. Such indication is appreciated.

Contrary to that asserted by the Examiner, Wang fails to teach or suggest that which is called for in claims 1-5, 7, 12, 14, 28-30, and 33. Wang, as best shown in Fig. 6 thereof, teaches an iterative process whereby a table is not moved to a next FOV until all views of a present FOV are acquired. Specifically, Wang teaches the steps of acquiring a view 372, determining if FOV acquisition is complete 374, and moving table to next FOV 376 only if FOV acquisition is complete 374(Y). In this regard, the table is fixed at a station while all the views for an entire FOV are acquired. After all the views of the FOV are acquired then, and only then, is the table moved to a next station for acquisition from the next FOV.

On the other hand, the present invention is directed to, in part, the selection of a slab thickness that is smaller than a desired FOV and the acquisition of a set of MR data from the selected slab thickness that includes acquiring full encoding data in a first direction for a subset of another two directions. After this acquisition, a step-wise movement of one of an optimal imaging volume and an imaging object occurs followed by the acquisition of another set of MR data until the desired FOV is imaged. As such, the entire FOV is not imaged until after one or more step-wise movements. This is in contrast to that taught by Wang wherein table movement does not occur until after the entire FOV is imaged. Accordingly, Wang fails to teach or suggest that which is called for in claims 1-5, 7, 12, 14, 28-30, and 33.

Regarding the objection to claim 28, Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion that the claim as written is grammatically awkward. Moreover, Applicant believes one skilled in the art would readily ascertain the subject matter and scope of that which is claimed. Accordingly, Applicant requests withdrawal of the objection to claim 28.

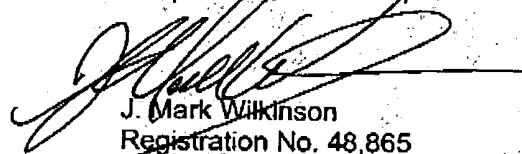
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In at least light of the foregoing, Applicant believes the present application to be in condition for allowance and, as such, Applicant respectfully requests timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance for claims 1-37.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's consideration of these Remarks and cordially invites the Examiner to call the undersigned, should the Examiner consider any matters unresolved.

Respectfully submitted,



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